

Montagu Square Garden Trust

✿ Autumn Newsletter ✿

Carols by Candlelight

Join us

**Wednesday 6th December, 6pm
Montagu Square Garden**

**With Wetherby Prep School Choir
The Baker Street Quartet & Friends
&
Robert Hallow**

**Volunteers and cakes,
welcome!
Contact:
gardenclerk@montagusquare.net**



Refreshment & Raffle Entrance on George Street. Admission free!
Proceeds to Early Childhood Centre - Church Street

Open Squares day

by Nicola Jackson



I was delighted to be invited as Writer in Residence for the London Open Squares scheme, one of 30 poets commissioned by the Poetry School in Lambeth and sponsored by the Arts Council.

It was an absolute delight to be introduced to Montagu Square by the Open Day organisers, Mary Hicks, Bethan Lewis-Powell, and initially Nanette Pigaga, all of whom made me so welcome, despite some initial concerns about how it might work to add a poet to the mix!

For me, the research was a delight, given the Square's rich history and colourful past residents such as Lady Hester Stanhope and Juliet Pollock. The interesting planting inspired, as well as the calm and beautiful environment of the Square. Bethan and Mary suggested 'contemplative' as the watch-word for the day, and I used this as I began to write.

For the Octopus

*Perhaps this garden is the sea,
with flitting birds as tiny fish
which brush out tender feet.*

*Perhaps the gravel has been laid
by delicate tips of suckered arms -
a different octopetala making art?*

*We move here in the gentle shade,
drift imperceptibly with the streams
sweeping us back to quiet glades.*

The day itself was a delight, with my kind husband acting as helper to set up poems I had written around the garden, and transforming the bench at the far end into a 'poetry nook' – for contemplation and a rest for tired feet!

I also prepared 'seed packet' poems with a Haiku on the packet, and a few seeds inside together with instructions and a template for the children to write their own brief rhyme. These proved enormously popular, and we gave out most of the 50 which I had prepared.



So where does this poem come from? As you will know, as you walk through Montagu Square, the "pinchpoint" in the middle is beautifully planted with dense foliage – camellias and rhododendrons, and over-arched with plane trees. As I walked, I could feel the perspective move around me. As I thought about past – resident Ringo Starr's beautiful song "The Octopus's Garden", I realised that this point in the garden feels like swimming through a reef. This poem imagines the garden as under the sea...



You will find the poems I wrote uploaded on my Blog at:
<http://poetrybyrights.blogspot.co.uk>

The Great Get Together



The event was held
on Saturday 17 June

I wasn't expecting an email from the Swedish ambassador but then we are living in surprising times. He had heard about the Great Get Together that we were planning to hold in our Marylebone square. Shauneen Lambe and I went off to meet him. We came back with the promise of 100 home cooked cinnamon buns. We had both known Jo Cox, not well, but enough to know she was an incredible force for good and so we had decided to organise one of the community parties that her husband, Brendan was encouraging the nation to do on the anniversary of her murder.

We also invited the young people from 'Let Us Learn' to the tea so they could meet the residents of my Marylebone square. Jo did a great deal of work with refugee and migrant communities and so inviting these young people seemed right – they are all from migrant families and are campaigning to be allowed to access funding for university places that their current status does not allow.

I don't know very many people on my square so we thought hard about how to get the local residents to come – luckily the Montagu Square Garden Trust got behind us and helped by emailing everyone and putting us in the square newsletter, a career highlight. I think this marketing was probably more successful than all the flyers we put through letterboxes – although that did indulge my fantasy of being a club promoter.

Shauneen took the lead on the games and activities. I took the lead on the food and drink. I lucked out because a

few emails to my old colleagues at M&S and tea for 60 was winging its way to my doorstep.

The day arrived – one of the hottest of the year and I became nervous that no one would come. But they did, not in huge numbers – but there was a brilliant mix of ages, backgrounds and stories. The Swedish ambassador brought his family; Just for kids law employees came with their families and the kids growing up on my square got to meet some kids they would never have talked to in normal life.

We played games, had races and most importantly, Sharon one of the Let us Learn team told her story very movingly to the gathered group.

Thank you to everyone who contributed and made the event all we could have wished for. I imagine Jo would have loved it.

I don't write all this detail because Shauneen and I did anything complex or remarkable but because I was struck at the generosity of spirit everyone showed to help make the afternoon a success.

Jo is famous for saying we have more in common than divides us, and our experience underlines that with a big bold pen.

I was also interested at how my neighbours were pleased to meet each other and share some fun – its often written how we have lost a sense of belonging in our local areas and how we all lead atomised lives. It may be true but if my experience is anything to go by, it doesn't take very much to change.

By Martha Lane Fox



Thank you from West London Mission

West London Mission is so grateful to the residents of Montagu Square. The 2017 **Garden Party** raised over **£7,000** for our work with homeless men and women from our centre on Seymour Place. Here, we provide essential services for people who sleep rough in the area, to help them back on their feet and into accommodation.

Recently, one of our Seymour Place service users told us “*This is a safe place and I don’t have that in life. I can relax here*”. To find out more about WLM’s work in Marylebone and make a donation please go to www.wlm.org.uk and to subscribe to our newsletter, please contact chloe.harrison@wlm.org.uk

Save the date!!

Annual General Meeting
Montagu Square Garden Trust

Monday
19 - Feb - 2018
6.30 pm

Montagu Square garden party

Monday
11 - June - 2018

A Marquee for Private Parties

When the marquee is erected for the Garden Party, we invite residents to book it for their private parties.

Available slots: 7 - 8 - 9 - 10 - June - 2018

Contact: gardenclerk@montagusquare.net

If you would like to become more involved in the Garden or have additional questions, please contact Luz Perez, the clerk to the Trustees at gardenclerk@montagusquare.net

MONTAGU SQUARE W1

CITY OF WESTMINSTER